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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/632,245	08/01/2003	Randy D. Cortright	09820.284	3309

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EXAMINER

LANGEL, WAYNE A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1754	

DATE MAILED: 01/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/632245

Applicant(s)

Cortright et al

Examiner

Langel

Group/Art Unit

1754

—The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet beneath the correspondence address—

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, such period shall, by default, expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____
- ☐ This action is **FINAL**.
- ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- ☒ Claim(s) 1-14, 17-24 and 45-49 is/are pending in the application.
- ☐ Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- ☒ Claim(s) 1-14, 17-24 and 45-49 is/are rejected.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement

Application Papers

- ☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.
- ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner
- ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d)

- ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d).
- ☐ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the:
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a))

*Certified copies not received: _____

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____
- ☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413
- ☒ Notice of Reference(s) Cited, PTO-892
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
- ☐ Other _____

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The non-statutory double patenting rejection, whether of the obviousness-type or non-obviousness-type, is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent. *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); and *In re Goodman*, 29 USPQ 2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(b) and (c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a non-statutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.78(d).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1-14, 17-24 and 45-49 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 15-17, 21-44 and 50-69 of copending application Serial No. 09/998,552. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the instant claims are broader than the claims recited in Application Serial No. 09/998,552.

This is a *provisional* rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. § 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or

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on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-14, 17-24 and 45-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over WO 99/48804. No distinction is seen between the process disclosed in WO 99/48804, and that recited in applicant's claims. WO 99/48804 discloses a process for the generation of hydrogen by the combined partial oxidation and steam reforming of dimethylether comprising contacting a mixture of the dimethylether, an oxygen-containing gas and steam with a precious metal which may include platinum or rhodium supported on zirconium oxide. (See the Abstract.) The dimethylether which is reacted in the process of WO 99/48804 would constitute a water-soluble oxygenated hydrocarbon having at least two carbon atoms.

Claims 1-14, 17-20 and 45-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wieland in view of Edlund '137.

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Wieland et al. disclose a method for steam reforming of alcohols in the presence of a catalyst which contains a palladium/zinc alloy and zinc oxide as catalytically active components. (See the Abstract.) The difference between the process disclosed by Wieland et al., and that recited in applicant's claims, is that applicant's claims require that the alcohol which is treated has at least two carbon atoms. Edlund '137 teaches in the sentence bridging columns 1 and 2 that hydrogen may be produced by reacting an alcohol vapor "such as methanol" and steam to produce hydrogen. It would be obvious from Edlund '137 to modify the process of Wieland et al. by steam reforming an alcohol having more than 2 carbon atoms, such as ethanol or propanol, since Edlund '137 implies that alcohols having two or more carbon atoms may be steam reformed to produce hydrogen, since Edlund '137 implies at column 2, line 1 that alcohols other than methanol may be steam reformed to produce hydrogen, and one of ordinary skill in the art would expect from such statement that alcohols such as ethanol or propanol could be steam reformed according to the process of Wieland et al.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Wayne A. Langel whose telephone number is (571) 272-1353. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stanley Silverman, can be reached on (571) 272-1358. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-0994.

WAL:cdc

January 23, 2004

Wayne A. Langel
WAYNE A. LANGEL
PRIMARY EXAMINER